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US/UK research centres announce collaboration

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Leading research centres in the United States and United Kingdom are embarking on a new set of collaborations involving weather and climate research and the technologies that underpin it. The agreement will enable the two countries to increase their jointly-conducted research to tackle the major challenge of climate change.

MOA signing

The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is between the US National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) and the UK's Met Office. A signing ceremony was held on 1 July at NCAR's headquarters in Boulder. The ceremony included representatives from NCAR, the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR), the Met Office and the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

"The research challenges that lie ahead are global and require international collaborations. NCAR is pleased to be working with the Met Office, since our visions are similar and there is great potential for synergistic results," said NCAR director Roger Wakimoto.

Julia Slingo, Met Office Chief Scientist said: "Building strong relations with partners across the world is essential in tackling the next level of questions on how our weather and climate systems work and what the future has in store. Bringing together expert scientists from the Met Office and NCAR will allow us deliver ground-breaking scientific outcomes in an increasingly efficient manner."

The goals of the partnership are to coordinate ongoing research and to develop and implement future joint projects in new areas of science. Focus areas include:

- Fundamental atmospheric processes, particularly related to the planetary boundary layer.
- Upper ocean processes and short-term upper ocean-atmosphere interactions in weather and climate prediction.
- Next generation modelling for massively parallel computing architectures.
- Predictability of the climate system on seasonal to decadal timescales.
- Real-time attribution of hazardous weather and climate extremes to human influences.

As the United Kingdom's national weather service, the Met Office provides weather forecasts and climate change advice to the public, businesses and the military; maintains a suite of models for weather prediction and climate projection; and conducts a wide range of atmospheric research.

NCAR is managed by the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR) under sponsorship by the National Science Foundation. The Center conducts wide-ranging research in chemistry, climate, weather, and solar-terrestrial interactions. It provides UCAR's 75 member institutions and other affiliates with state-of-the-art instrumentation, aircraft and computer technology to advance the study of Earth's atmosphere.

The partnership was facilitated by the UK FCO's Science & Innovation (S&I) Network in Houston, working closely with the Denver Consulate-General. The S&I team is organizing a programme of workshops and exchange visits during 2010, in partnership with NCAR and the Met Office, on a range of climate and weather topics.

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